

CHAPTER III.  
FIVE ANCIENT FAITHS.

Brahmins, Buddhists, Egyptians, Assyrians and Babylonians,  
Zoroastrians.

AS Eastern religions evolved from their primitive stage, the priestly magicians became fearful for their position. If the people were to shake off superstition, develop a code of ethics based on reason, and receive their inspiration directly from God, they would cease to support and venerate the priesthood. The schools of magic which formed the core of the priestly caste in India, Chaldaea, Babylonia, Egypt, and elsewhere, had, at different times, to face this menace to their institution; and everywhere they resorted to the same device.

To meet the growing moral and cultural needs of the people, they promulgated more elaborate theologies, and more and more complex religious observances. The popular imagination was captured by the former and daily life preoccupied with the latter. To strengthen the hold of pantheism on the people, much attention was given to demonology : the layman was taught that he was surrounded by bad-tempered spirits which the priest alone knew how to placate. Goaded by the dread of helpless isolation and fascinated by the brilliant new colours religion had assumed, the people placed unbounded faith in the pure ideals, vast knowledge and enlightenment of their priests.

While thus outwardly religion assumed imposing proportions, inwardly it remained unchanged. The schools of magicians, called in some lands schools of prophets, continued on exactly the same lines; but their esoteric doctrine

contrasted more sharply with the new veneer of idealist philosophy preached to the people. The old phallic mysteries remained the secret of the high initiates among the priesthood.

The great secret was safe-guarded by every conceivable means. Among them :

1. It was never committed to writing but passed from mouth to mouth in the strictest privacy. (To this rule, there was no exception, apparently, before the second century A.D.)
2. The priests were not all initiated in the mystery. Some were admitted to a part of it, but only those few who showed special aptitude and who had first proved their loyalty in a series of tests, received full knowledge.
3. Novices were initiated into the mystery not all at once, but by stages or grades. At each stage, ' a veil was lifted ' and a new aspect disclosed.
4. In order that the dogma might be preserved in its entirety and not suffer distortion through oral repetition, it was cryptically incorporated in the sacred texts. A sentence here, a passage there, to which the layman would attach no importance, was pregnant with esoteric meaning to the high initiate. Sometimes the same words had double meanings; or, the words had to be replaced by their esoteric counterparts; or again, there was a whole system of codes to be applied before the passage could be deciphered.

With all these precautions, it is no wonder that the secret was kept so long and so faithfully in so many lands by the favoured few.

Had these rules been always carefully observed, even to-day it might still be inscrutable to the profane. But, for one of these pagan faiths, the first rule was broken : the key was committed to writing in the second century A.D., and, in spite of the cryptic style, the door was opened to a mastery of the various codes.

With a knowledge of this key, a study of the other Eastern

theologies reveals, beneath the superficial dissimilarities of race and epoch, their common esoteric origin. (1)

A brief survey of only five of these religions is here attempted. It is however suggested that the critical reader will find it easy to supplement this information by consulting standard works in English on each of the religions of the East, such as are found in the larger libraries.

### BRAHMINISM.

Of the prayers used in India's greatest religion, Brahmin-ism, there is the following invocation for sacrifice contained in the Rig Veda: (2)

" O Gods who are eleven in number in the heavens; who are eleven in number on the earth; and, who, eleven in number, dwell with glory in the midst of the airs, May our sacrifice find favour with you."

Here is the number eleven taken three times, making thirty-three in all: that is, the hendekaglyph in its triple and most perfect form. See Plates IVa and IVb.

Using the esoteric numbering, 0-10, one finds that the thirty-three gods of the invocation fall into the following arrangement.

In the first realm, that of the heavens, we have : 0. Brahm the Infinite, the Limitless. The word "Brahm" is derived from the Sanskrit word for " being," " existence." Brahm is Existence and also Non-Existence.

In the Bhagavadgita (ch. ix.), it says : " I am Immortality and also Death; and I, O Arguna, am that which is and that which is not"—(or, " which exists negatively ")

Brahm is the divine substance everywhere present: " And, O descendant of Bharata, see wonders in numbers, unseen before. (3) Within my body, O Gudakesa, see to-day the whole universe, including everything movable and immovable, all in one." Arguna said :

" O Infinite Lord of the Gods, O Thou who pervadest

(1) Cf. L. Meurin, *La Franc-Maconnerie* (Paris, 1893).

(2) Adhyaya II. Anakaka xx. Sukta, iv, v. II.

(3) Note the stress on numbers.

the universe. Thou art the Indestructible, that which is, that which is not, and what is beyond them. Thou art the Primal God, the Ancient One; Thou art the highest support of this universe. By Thee is this universe pervaded, O thou of the infinite forms . . . Thou art of infinite power, of unmeasured glory; Thou pervadest all, and therefore Thou art all."

Then comes the first triangle or trinity, corresponding to the Intellectual World :

1. Brahma the Lord. Formed from the root "Brahm," Brahma signifies the Being par excellence, the great " I AM." (Compare the universal ego.) He is the first emanation of Brahm the Infinite: the first person in the trinity; the Lord or Creator of the universe. He is Brahma Vach, both male and female, viz. hermaphrodite. He is Brahma Viraj, and is imagined separating his body into two parts (male and female) and creating vach and viraj.

2. Vishnu the Preserver is begotten of Brahma; the second person of the trinity, he is forethought or wisdom.

3. Shiva, third person of the trinity, is the Fire-God. He is the Destroyer or Transformer.

After the trinity and emanating from it, are the seven archangels or Adityas. This second triad corresponds to the Moral World :

4. Varuna, God of Night and of Water.

5. Mithra, God of Day and of Light. (Compare "Strength," Plate III.)

5. Aryaman, the Heart's Friend. This number falls over the "heart" (viz. abdomen or solar plexus). In the third triad (sexual organs), corresponding to the Material World, are found : 7. Bhaga, and 8. Ansa. 9. Daksha, Male Energy.

Below is shown the point : 10. Dhatri the Shaper or Form-Giver.

According to the doctrine of the Vedanta, from the head of Brahma are sprung the Brahmins, the caste of priests

and seers; from his shoulders, the Kshatriyas, the caste of kings and warriors; from his stomach, the Vaissyas, the caste of merchants; and from his feet, the Sutras, the caste of labourers and tillers of the soil.

This doctrine shows that (in the hendekaglyph) there are not eleven distinct gods, but one (the phallic god) and his various attributes. The first triad is the head, etc.

In the second realm (B), Earth, the corresponding parts are : 0. Marttanda, the Sun, the Eighth Aditya or archangel. The trinity:

1. Pratyusha, the Light.
2. Soma, the Moon, and
3. Dhruva, the Pole Star.

As frequently happens in esoteric figures, some of the parts appear here to have been intentionally transposed, to deceive the profane. The logical order would be :

0. Light the Limitless.
1. Sun, the Creator of the solar system.
2. Moon, offspring of the sun.
3. Pole Star.

In fact, this is nearly identical with the order shown in Plate IXb. The second triad is composed of : 4 and 5. Aswini Kumaras, the two stars we call the

Dioskouroi, fore-runners of the dawn. 6. Prabhasa, the Dawn. (Compare " Beauty " in Plate III : dawn is the symbol of beauty.)

The third triad has: 7. Apa, Water, and 8. Anita, Air. 9. Anala, Fire (of sexual passions).

The point below is : 10. Dhara, the Earth (soil), source of all wealth. (Compare No. 10 in Plate I.)

In the third realm (C), Hell, are found :

0. Shiva Rudra, the Howler. He is called also Maha Deva, the Great Divinity. Shiva the Fire-God is thus both the third person in the trinity (A), and the god of the infernal regions.

His Ten Sons (emanations or incarnations) are

- |                 |                |
|-----------------|----------------|
| 1. Adjaikapada. | 6. Vahurupa.   |
| 2. Ahivradhna.  | 7. Aparadjita. |
| 3. Virupaksha.  | 8. Savitra.    |
| 4. Sureswara.   | 9. Tryambaka.  |
| 5. Djayanta.    | 10. Hara.      |

In passing, it may be mentioned that the Devas inhabit the Three Worlds (above described), which are the three planes above the physical. There are thirty-three groups of devas, each group composed of ten million devas, making 330 million devas in all. These numbers are merely an extension of the hendekaglyph. One can see why the layman felt so utterly dependent on the priesthood. What man would care to face 330 million devas single-handed! It shows the extent to which demonology was carried in India.

Following Brahminic doctrine further, one finds another triple hendekaglyph, shown in Plate V. In this, the third section is incomplete : one trinity is missing. This is not infrequent in magical symbolism : the missing part is thought of as present but concealed or invisible.

Each of the trinity shown in Hendekaglyph A, Plate IVa, viz. Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiva, becomes the source 0 (zero) of a hendekaglyph in Plate V.

We have Brahma and his Ten Rishis. The word "Rishi" has the meaning of " seer," but here the Rishis are supposed to be devas of some kind.

0. Brahma Prajapati, Brahma the Creator or Progenitor.

1. Marichi, the Eternal Reason. Brahmins regard him as the personification of Light, parent of Surya the Sun. Northern Buddhists and the School of Yogacharya, regard Marichi as a Boddhisattva (next stage before Nirvana, 0); while Chinese Buddhists and Taoists take Marichi as standing for the Queen of Heaven, the Goddess of Light, Mistress of the Sun and Moon. In all these systems, Marichi occupies the place corresponding to 1.
2. Atri, Wisdom.
3. Angiras, Intelligence.
4. Pulastya, Goodness.

5. Pulaha, Power.
6. Kratu, Majesty.
7. Prachetas, Agent of Preservation.
8. Bhrigu, Agent of Transformation.
9. Vasishtha, Agent of Creation.
10. Narada, representing the union of all Prajapatis in the self-existing deity and the never-ending production.

In the second section, Vishnu is shown as:

0. Hari Bhagavat, the Lord.

His Ten Avatars or Incarnations are :

1. Matsya, the Fish.
2. Kurma, the Tortoise.
3. Varaha, the Wild Boar.
4. Nara-Sinha, the Man-Lion.
5. Vamana, the Dwarf.
6. Parasu Rama, Rama with the Axe.
7. Krishna, the Black or Dark.
8. Buddha, the Enlightened.
9. Rama Chandra, Rama the Moon or the Moonstruck.  
(Chandra is synonymous with Soma, the Moon.)
10. Kalki, the White Horse.

The third section is devoted to Shiva Rudra and his Seven Hells (Sapt-Patal) :

0. Shiva Rudra, the Howler.

1. Atala, the Horrible Abyss, also called, Mahamaya, the Great Illusion.
2. Vitala, the Terrible Abyss, also called Katakeshvar, God of Gold.
3. Sutala, the Enormous Abyss, also called Mahabali, Formidable Giant.
4. Talatala, Abyss of Abysses, also called Maya, Illusion.
5. Mahatala, the Great Abyss, also called Nagas, Great Serpents.
6. Rasatala, Disgusting Abyss, also called Daityas-va-Dang-cas, Giants and Titans.
7. Patala, the Profound Abyss, also called Vasauki, King of Serpents.

The trinity, Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiva, are sometimes represented as three heads with one body. In the Island of Elephanta, in Bombay Harbour, is an underground temple which contains a gigantic statue of Brahma with three heads (Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiva) : it is known as "Trimurti" or the Trinity.

Thus, in Plate V, are represented the different aspects or incarnations of the same god, classed according to his three principal attributes.

As Shiva the Destroyer, this god revels in cruelty and bloodshed. " Although this deity is sometimes represented in the human form in his images, it is not thus that he is most frequently adored. The most popular representation of him is unquestionably the Linga; a smooth stone rising out of another stone of finer texture, simulacrum membri virilis, et pudendum muliebre. This emblem is identical with Shiva in his capacity of ' Lord of all."

(4) The phallic god.

" It is not only the votaries of Shiva who adore their god under the symbolic form of the Linga; the Vaishnavas, or followers of Vishnu, use the same medium." (5)

In the sacerdotal cast of the Brahmins, there are seven degrees of initiation. The esoteric 7 is frequently substituted for the esoteric 10. These degrees are: (6)

1. Grihasta, or House-Master.
2. Pourohita, or Priest of Popular Evocations.
3. Fakir, Performing.
4. Sanyassis or Naked Cenobites, Superior Exorcists.
5. Nirvanys, Naked Evocators.
6. Yogys, Contemplative.
7. Brahmatma, Supreme Chief.

### BUDDHISM.

From Brahminism in the sixth century B.C. sprang Buddhism. Prince Gautama, of the little kingdom of Kapila-vastu in Northern India, inspired by the purest motives,

(4) Edward Sellon, Annotations on the Sacred Writings of the Hindus, p. 8.

(5) Ibid. p. 40. Cf. Occult Theocracy by Lady Queenborough, chapter on Brahminism (pp. 44 ff.) for fuller account.

(6) Louis Jacolliot, Occult Science in India, pp. 73 ff.



sought to free the people from fear, suffering, and superstition. To this end, he forsook wife, home, and kingdom, in search of enlightenment. His unselfish life and high ethical standards won the noblest hearts of his day. But the doctrine he left was as dark as that from which he had hoped to deliver his contemporaries. His teachers were Brahmins, and the theology afterwards elaborated by his disciples, bore the hall-mark of magic.

In the Buddhist system are found the numbers 11 and 33, of the single and triple hendekaglyph. In a Buddhist book is told the legend of King Rawma, who had thirty-two sons. These thirty-two princes married their thirty-two cousins, and each cousin had thirty-two children. (7)

Sepher Yetzirah, one of the books of the Kabbalah, speaks of "32 paths." The term "path" is used to signify a hieroglyphic idea, or rather sphere of ideas, which may be attached to any glyph or symbol. (8) The same explanation holds for the "sons" of King Rawma. The esoteric 32 corresponds to the exoteric 33.

In Plate VI, the number 11 is shown in a dual system: two hendekaglyphs, with a third concealed; or one hendekaglyph and its reflection. The magic number 33 is mentioned (see No. 9 below).

The concentric circles on the left in Plate VI represent:

0. Nirvana or Negative Existence. The plane of those "who neither think nor do not think." Adi Buddha, the Ancient Enlightened One.

1. The Plane of Annihilation, or Boddhisattva: "He whose essence (sattva) has become Intelligence-Wisdom."

2. The Plane of Consciousness.

3. The Plane of the Ether, or the Ethereal Plane.

These four planes or spheres of existence are known as the World Without Forms. (Compare the source 0(zero) and the first trinity.) Then come the Seven Planes of the World of Forms and Colours (corresponding to the seven archangels):

4. The Eighteen Degrees of Moral and Intellectual Perfection.

(7) Migne, *Les Livres Sacres des Paiens*, II. 478.

(8) Mathers, *The Kabbalah Unveiled* (London, 1926), p. 14.

5. The Heaven of Lord Iswara. Iswara is the "divine spirit" in man, " sovereign existence." (Compare "Strength" and "Life-Force," Plate III.)

6. The Heaven of Conversion. (Conversion is a matter of the heart: compare "The Heart's Friend" in Plate IVb.)

7. The Dwelling of Joy.

8. Yama-Loka or Yama-Pur, Dwelling of Yama.

9. The Heaven of the Thirty-Three.

10. The Sphere of the Four Gods who preside over the Four Quarters of the Globe. (The "sum" of 4 = 10.

Compare the " Kingdom," Plate III.)

The concentric circles on the right in Plate VI:

0. The Dwelling of the Devas, the highest or fourth level of Mount Sumeru (= Mount Olympus of Buddhism).

1. The next lower or third level of Mt. Sumeru.

2. The second level of Mt. Sumeru.

3. The first level of Mt. Sumeru.

Below Mt. Sumeru are : (Compare the following seven with the " Seven Parts "of the Soul," chap. II and Plate I B.)

4. The Nagas or Dragons; the Garondas, Marvellous Birds, etc.

5. Men. (Compare No. 5 above.)

6. The Asuras or Genii. Exoterically, they are Evil Genii; esoterically, they are Good Genii.

7. The Pretahs or Familiar Spirits. Pretah ("departed") signifies disincarnate soul, good or bad. The astral shell disintegrates more or less rapidly, depending on the kind of person to whom it belonged.

8. Animals.

9. The Inhabitants of the Hells.

10. Eternal Matter.

The last four (7-10) are known as the Evil States.

### EGYPTIAN THEOGONY.

From the dawn of history, Egypt has always been the great land of esoteric religion, as the pyramids and other monuments testify. Much of the esoteric knowledge of the Hebrews was undoubtedly acquired from the Egyptian priest-

hood. The close parallels between the esoteric system of the Egyptians and that of the Kabbalah and the Old Testament are a study in itself.(9)

We shall content ourselves with giving a very early Egyptian theogony (birth of the gods). It is the simple hendekaglyph shown in Plate VII.

- |           |                |              |               |
|-----------|----------------|--------------|---------------|
| 0. Nu.    | 1. Neb-er-ter. | 2. Shu.      | 3. Tefnut.    |
|           | 4. Nut.        | 5. Seb.      | 6. Osiris.    |
| 7. Horus. | 8. Sut.        | 9. Isis, and | 10. Nephthys. |

In a later theogony, Isis, Osiris, and their son Horus, form the first trinity of another hendekaglyph.

In another chapter, we shall deal with the system of the Egyptian Thoth, more familiarly known under the Greek name of Hermes Trismegistos. (See chap. X and Plate XX.)

### ASSYRIANS AND BABYLONIANS.

The theology of the Assyrians and Babylonians has suffered so many changes and has come down to us in such a fragmentary form, that it is difficult to give a satisfactory account of it.

Nevertheless, on the obelisk of Salmanasar II, the god Assur—the Asura of the Hindus, the Ahura of the Persians—is inscribed at the head of a list of twelve great divinities.

The last two on the list appear to be later additions: they are, Beltis, wife of Bel, and Ishtar, daughter of Sin. In any case, they have no real significance. Eliminating these last two, one has the hendekaglyph shown in Plate VIII.

- |            |           |              |            |
|------------|-----------|--------------|------------|
| 0. Anu.    | 1. Assur. | 2. Bel.      | 3. Hea.    |
|            | 4. Bin.   | 5. Sin.      | 6. Samas.  |
| 7. Nargal. | 8. Ninip. | 9. Merodakh. | 10. Nusku. |

### ZOROASTRIANISM.

The Zoroastrian cosmogony shown in Plates IXa and IXb is one of the most complete, and should be studied in comparison both with the general example given in Plate III and with the Brahminic system (Plates IVa, IVb, and V.).

(9) Cf. *Les Origines de la Genese et l'Enseignement des Temples de l'Ancienne Egypte* by Enel (Cairo, Imprimerie de l'Institut Francais d'Archeologie Orientale, 1936).

The first realm, Garonemana, Heaven, represents:

0. Ahu, Existence. The word Ahu is etymologically connected with the word for " being." (Compare "Brahm," Plate IVa.)

The trinity:

1. Ahura, the Being, the Lord, derived from Ahu. (Compare " Brahma.")

2. Mazda, the Great Wisdom, emanating from Ahura. (Compare "Wisdom" in Plate III, and Vishnu in Plate IVa.)

3. Atars, Fire. Son of Ahura and Mazda. (Compare " Fire-God," Plate IVb.)

Then follow the Seven Emanations of the trinity:

4. Ahuramazda Amesha Spenta, Archangel and Chief of Archangels.

5. Vohu Mano, Man; or the Good Spirit in Man. This second triad (4, 5, 6) is male, whereas the third is female.

6. Asha Vahista, Purity or Truth. (Compare " Beauty," Plate III.)

7. Haurvatat, Riches. (Compare " Triumph," Plate I.)

8. Ameretat, Immortality. (Compare " Glory," Plate I.)

9. Spenta-Armaiti, Holy Mother. This refers to the triad (7, 8, 9) considered as a whole: female.

The point below is:

10. Khshathra, the Kingdom. (Compare " The Kingdom," Plate III.)

The second realm, Celestial Creatures, furnishes another example of transposition. Comparing Plate IXb with Plate III, one sees that if, in Plate III, the hendekaglyphs labelled " Celestial Man " and " Terrestrial Man " correspond to the hendekaglyphs labelled "Heaven" and "Earthly Creatures" in Plate IXb, then the hendekaglyph "Infernal Man" (Plate III) must correspond (if to anything) to the hendekaglyph "Heavenly Creatures" (Plate IXb).

This relation presents no difficulties, as soon as one perceives that in one instance—Plate III, "Infernal Man"—we

have the exoteric meaning, and in the other (Plate IXb) we have the esoteric. What exoteric calls evil, esoteric calls good.

In the central figure of Plates IXa and IXb are:

0. Ahuramazda Yazata, Genius of Light and Chief of Ten Yazatas or Genii which follow. (Compare " Satan," Plate III.)

1. Mithra, Spirit of the Sun; also known as Mitra-Mithra, both male and female (Hermaphrodite). (Compare exoteric term " Darkness," Plate III.)

2. Ardvicura Anahita, Spirit of Water.

3. Atars, Spirit of Fire.

4. Sraosha, Spirit of Obedience. (Compare exoteric opposite " Pride," Plate III.)

5. Rashnu-razista, Spirit of Justice. (Compare " Justice," Plate I, and exoteric opposite " Envy," Plate III.)

6. Parendi, Protectress of Treasures.

7. Fravashis, Protectors of the Just. (Compare exoteric opposite " Crime," Plate III.)

8. Geus Arva, Spirit of Earth.

9. Ashis Vanguhi, Protectress of Marriage. (Compare exoteric opposite " Defilement," Plate III.)

10. Verethraghna, Spirit of Victory.

In the last hendekaglyph, Terrestrial Creatures, are:

0. Anaghra Raocao, Infinite Light.

1. Hvars Khshaeta, the Sun.

2. Mao, the Moon.

3. Tistrya, the Star Sirius.

Then follow:

4. Daena, the Law.

5. Arstat, Justice.

6. Manthra-spenta, Holy Scripture.

7. Vota, the Wind.

8. Zemyad, the Earth.

9. Raman, the Air.

10. Asman, the Heavens.

Obviously comparisons will suggest themselves.

The Zoroastrian doctrine is famous for the stress it lays on the principle of Dualism : evil is the exact counterpart of

good; one may pursue either. Hence what is exoterically called evil, is esoterically called good. This dogma is the "looking-glass" theory of magic, explained in chapter II.

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In this glance at five oriental theogonies, one finds a certain eternal principle from which emanates the first triad, and, from the latter, the entire universe, not by creation, but by procreation or emanation of substance. This pantheistic doctrine of emanation is found in all the famous philosophies of antiquity, in all pagan faiths, among the Hindus, Persians, Babylonians, Assyrians, Egyptians. Jews, Greeks, and the rest.

The religions of the East, with their wealth of sacred literature, their exuberant imagery, and idealistic theories, have a strong human appeal.

Yet behind all and dominating all, woven with the beautiful legends of the divinities, with bits of age-old wisdom, with impressive ceremonies and striking ritual, but seen only by the highest sacerdotal initiates, is the terrible symbol of the phallic god. The strength of the priesthood lies in magic. By it, and by it alone, has this caste been able to maintain its superiority above every other class, and its influence over the lives of the kings and the meanest of their subjects.